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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2480
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD 0509
RUEHAB/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 1790
RUEHKB/AMEMBASSY BAKU 1269
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST 0765
RUEHCH/AMEMBASSY CHISINAU 0306
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 1441
RUEHSF/AMEMBASSY SOFIA 0933
RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI 2919
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 1454
RUEHYE/AMEMBASSY YEREVAN 1140
RUEHVK/AMCONSUL VLADIVOSTOK 0039
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 0225
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 9518
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1392
RUEHAST/USOFFICE ASTANA 0037
RUEHZN/EST COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000104

SIPDIS

USAID FOR TROSTLE, BLANCHET AND CARROLL
HHS FOR WSTEIGER/PBUDASHEWITZ
FAS FOR ITP/MACKE/THOMAS, CMP/DLP/WETZEL, FAS/JDEVER
FAS PASS FSIS AND APHIS
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GENEVA PASS HEALTH ATTACHE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: TBIO AMED EAID CASC SENV EAGR KPAO TU

SUBJECT: Turkey Avian Influenza Update - January 6

Ref: ANKARA 58 AND PREVIOUS

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¶11. Summary. As of mid-day January 6 there are three confirmed deaths resulting from bird flu. The third death has not confirmed as H5N1, however the three positive cases yesterday have now been confirmed as H5N1. European Union and WHO teams arrived in Turkey January 5 and travelled to the affected region on January 6. The Agriculture Ministry continues to be proactive in culling and quarantining, including in areas of suspected-but unconfirmed-outbreaks. Prime Minister Erdogan has denied the swirl of accusations of government mishandling and said the Government will use mosque sermons and schools to get the public awareness message out. End Summary.

Cases in Humans

¶12. The GOT Ministry of Health (MOH) has confirmed a third death from AI in Turkey: an 11-year old who was a member of the same family in which two members had previously died (reftel). Contrary to press reports, the MOH official told us the third case has so far tested negative for AI, however. Another family's separate, fourth case of illness who is still living, as well as the two earlier death cases, have now been confirmed as having the N1 strain of the H5

virus. The MOH official specified that the standard procedure is for the samples to be tested locally as well as sent to London for further testing.

¶13. The MOH official said there are 12 cases under observation, all in Van (far-eastern Turkey, near the Iranian border). All 12 of these cases have been treated with Tamiflu. Two of the death cases were also treated with Tamiflu but the treatments were begun late in the progression of the illness. The MOH official added that there are other outpatient cases but they may be "panic cases" unrelated to AI. The MOH official also said samples from the 12 cases under observation have been sent to a laboratory in Istanbul but no results as of mid-day local time. (We received conflicting information from the laboratory itself which said it had received samples from only 4 cases.) Results are expected late today local time.

¶14. Turkish media coverage has been extensive and sensationalistic, including exaggerated reports of additional outbreaks. In an effort to reassure the public, on the morning of January 6, Prime Minister Erdogan, commenting on the situation for the first time, denied allegations-increasingly heard in the Turkish press-of a slow or inadequate GOT response. Erdogan called on the public to report sick animals and said the Government would use the Government-controlled Friday sermon in mosques, as well as schools, to get the public awareness message out. Nonetheless, most Turks remain furious over what they perceive to be government misrepresentation of the initial facts and subsequent inadequate efforts to contain and resolve the problem.

¶15. Press has reported that affected villages have been

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quarantined. However, it is our understanding that only in Dogbeyazit-the site of the deaths-have there been restrictions on movement of people. The authorities have requested that poultry farmers remain in Dogubeyazit.

Poultry Outbreaks and Government Actions

¶16. Over 4,000 birds have been culled in the confirmed outbreak areas. There has been more culling as precautionary measures in other areas, so in total over 5,000 birds have been culled. Agriculture Minister Eker announced that animal quarantine measures are in place in all provinces from which they received notification of sick birds, without waiting for test results. He said animal quarantine measures were in effect in eight provinces with confirmed or suspicious cases: Van, Igdir, Mus, Agri, Ardahan, Erzurum, Sanliurfa, and Yozgat. (Note: All of these provinces--except Yozgat--are in far eastern Turkey. The test results are expected later on January 6 for the cases in Yozgat, which is in central Anatolia, approximately 200 km east of Ankara. End Note.)

¶17. In the areas under animal quarantine, entry and exit of all animals is prohibited. Agriculture Ministry and traffic police officials are inspecting vehicles at the borders of the affected towns in order to prevent transportation of live animals from the affected towns.

International Cooperation

¶18. Experts from the World Health Organization (WHO), the European Union (EU) Center for Communicable Disease and a European Commission veterinary expert (OIE/FAO) arrived in Ankara January 5, met with GOT officials and are currently in the affected region in eastern Turkey. We will get more detailed information about these meetings with the GOT and

intended actions later on January 6.

Next Steps

¶ 9. January 6 is the last official business day for the Government of Turkey prior to the 10-day Kurban Bayram holiday. However, both the GOT and this mission will continue ongoing efforts and we will provide Washington with regular updates on developments here.

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